

Meeting Report

Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail Kick-off Public Meeting and Open Forum July 26, 2000

Earth Conservation Corps Center
1st Street and Potomac Ave., SE

Speakers: Host: Mark Davis, Earth Conservation Corps
Facilitator: Brenda Richardson, Women Like Us
Presenters: Toni Griffin, Uwe Brandes, Robert Patten, DC Office of Planning
Presenter: John Parsons, Natl. Park Service

Audience: 55 people were in attendance. They represented residents from both east and west of the river, ANC's and neighborhood associations, many local and national environmental organizations, federal agencies, regional government, DC government agencies, DC Council members, consulting businesses, and included a number of local design professionals and advocates.

Agenda Summary: The agenda included an update on the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, a report on the Riverwalk and Trail planning process and schedule, and a report on how the National Park Service General Management Plan will be coordinated with the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative. These reports were followed by a general question and answer session about the trail. Office of Planning staff recorded the audience's questions and comments, which are presented below.

Summary of Public Comments and Questions: To make the public comments easier to digest, they have been organized into the following four topic areas:

Waterfront Access

- ?? Provide trail continuity along the river.
- ?? Make as many connections as possible to City neighborhoods and across the river; create circulation circuits using existing bridge crossings with enhanced bike and pedestrian accommodations, or new bike/pedestrian bridge crossings.
- ?? Use footbridges to overcome the river's divide.
- ?? Passage across the river by boat should be considered.
- ?? Think about boating access: ferry, commercial tour boats, private boats, etc.
- ?? Currently, it is difficult to cross the river if you are not in a car or motor vehicle.
- ?? Link the Riverwalk to Hains Point/East Potomac Park promenade and walking circuits.
- ?? Carefully consider getting the trail through or around Ft. McNair; Fort authorities may not be cooperative.

Trail and Urban Design

- ?? Pursue a design that integrates and blends the park with surrounding neighborhoods.
- ?? The Riverwalk should provide different experiences in different areas and neighborhoods.
- ?? Avoid designing the Riverwalk and Trail as a facility that turns its back on the city.
- ?? There are many conflicting land uses in the SE/SW waterfront area -- property ownership in this area is a key issue.
- ?? Design the trail with public safety issues in mind.
- ?? Include unique architectural designs in the structures along the river; draw upon the traditions of architectural follies such as Central Park, where landscape and architectural structures have symbiotic relationship.
- ?? The experience of Minneapolis is instructive -- they have high density residential units fronting the

parkland around the city's many lakes.

- ?? Create sites and places that enhance developer's opportunities to pursue successful/profitable developments.
- ?? Pursue excellence in design, along the lines of the Olmstead parks created in the 19th century.

Environment

- ?? Develop ecological riparian zones along river edges which are more than just a grass buffer. This zone should facilitate improved water quality and habitat and filter direct surface runoff flowing into the river.
- ?? The River should have living edges of natural habitat.
- ?? The issue of soft edge vs. hard edge is a complex problem; there is a need for permeable surfaces along the river edge to filter city runoff.
- ?? Make sure that water quality issues are included in the long range plans.
- ?? The photos presented of riverwalks in Pittsburgh, PA and Shreveport, LA were not good examples from a water quality perspective.
- ?? Use the opportunity of buffer zones to plant native plant and tree species, which can provide valuable shade along the trail.
- ?? It is important to use the River's edge to check the flow and filter the surface runoff.
- ?? Reverse the fill on the water's edge by creating restored wetlands.
- ?? The idea of Zoo's now being called "Bioparks" is instructive. We need a new term for our riparian access area that describes its increased integrity as an ecology healing facility. Can the Riverfront be a riparian "Biopark?"
- ?? Have management of water runoff integrated into the new building developments, using open space areas, catchment ponds and open streams, and bio-engineered natural areas.
- ?? Comprehensive solutions are needed to solve environmental issues.

The Planning Process

- ?? Question of terminology: Concept Plan vs. Master Plan: Make this the real plan.
- ?? How will the Concept Plan be implemented?
- ?? Preparing a summary of the questions that the Concept Plan needs to answer would be helpful to public participants in the planning process.
- ?? How does this planning process relate to the Comprehensive Plan? Is the Riverwalk and Trail in the Comprehensive Plan?
- ?? The Home Rule Act provides a way for Comprehensive Plan elements to translate directly into the Capital Budget.
- ?? Track the funds committed to the project and make them known; make the plans for future funding known.
- ?? Track current investments of all kinds in the waterfront area.
- ?? Keep the planning local to neighborhoods to ensure diversity in the character of the Riverwalk and Trail.
- ?? Develop a continuing body of knowledge; and use a website for collection and dissemination.
- ?? The process needs diagrams of Planning Process and organizational relationships.
- ?? Need more representatives of the community East of the River to be involved.
- ?? Next meeting should be located East of the River.
- ?? Provide walking tours of the river as public participation planning sessions.
- ?? Use images to communicate ideas about design and access. Allow people to comment on and modify images of the trail.
- ?? Engage Maryland about connections to trails along the river and all aspects of the process.
- ?? Engage Maryland regarding development in the watershed; shopping center proposed for Greenbelt metro station, etc.